

Caucus Will Be Ally for High Speed Rail Supporters in America

WASHINGTON – The founding members of the Bi-Cameral High-Speed & Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus today joined together at Union Station to announce the formation of a coalition that will serve as the leading advocates to advance high-speed and intercity rail programs across the country.

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) and Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ), along with Congressmembers Corrine Brown (FL-3), Zoe Lofgren (CA-16), David Price (NC-4), Tim Walz (MN-1) and John Olver (MA-1) joined together today at Washington's Union Station to announce the founding of the Bi-Cameral High-Speed Rail Caucus. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) will also join the bicameral delegation. The caucus will be dedicated to supporting federal legislative and funding policies to ensure the long-term viability of the high-speed and intercity passenger rail program.

Each founding Co-Chair represents a region containing a major high-speed and intercity rail corridors that, when completed, will make up a national high-speed rail network anticipated to both directly and indirectly spur the creation of hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs across the country.

The Obama Administration has set the goal to give 80 percent of Americans access to high-speed rail within 25 years. Lawmakers gathered together today to argue that funding for high-speed and intercity rail programs are exactly the type of bold investment necessary to increase America's competitiveness.

"Like President Obama, we share the goal of giving 80 percent of Americans access to high speed rail within 25 years," said Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28). "We understand that this investment will more than pay for itself with the jobs created for Americans in need of work, and opportunities it creates for future growth. As rail lines open and communities are brought closer together, the potential long-term impact of rail service will only grow. I represent Upstate New York which is home to the busiest freight corridor in the nation, stretching between Buffalo and Albany. A dedicated third track for high-speed, intercity travel will mean \$1.1 billion in new wages and 21,000 estimated new jobs in my home state alone.

“As a long-time supporter of high-speed rail, I am pleased to join forces with Senator Durbin and my House colleagues to put America’s rail network on the fast track,” said Senator Lautenberg, Chairman of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, which has jurisdiction over our nation’s passenger rail infrastructure. “This Caucus will help further develop the Northeast Corridor and lead a high-speed rail revolution in America that will create jobs and boost the economy.

“For several years, we have had a strong coalition of leaders in the Midwest advocating for high speed rail,” said Senator Durbin. “That partnership has resulted in over \$1.4 billion in federal high speed rail funding to Illinois, including funding for the CREATE project, new rail service from Chicago to the Quad Cities and implementing 110 mph service on the Chicago to St. Louis line. This is more than just an alternative mode of transportation – the Midwest high speed rail network will create an estimated \$23.1 billion in economic activity. With job-creating funding like this under attack in some states, forming a nationwide coalition that affirms our commitment to high speed rail is crucial.”

“High-speed rail is an important component of a modernized transportation system. Without an adequate investment in passenger rail, population growth will create more congested highways and airspace, increased travel delays, and environmental degradation. The creation of this caucus demonstrates our commitment to making high speed rail a reality across our nation,” said Congressman John Olver.

“As the Ranking Democrat on the Railroad subcommittee, I am more than pleased to serve as an active participant in the newly created High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus,” said Congresswoman Corrine Brown. “Indisputably, the creation and maintenance of a high speed rail system in the United States would serve as a tremendous boost for our nation’s infrastructure, our economy, and for job creation. I have been a key advocate in the effort to secure a dedicated funding source for high speed rail and believe that with the creation of this Caucus, we will build even more momentum towards achieving this goal.”

“High-speed rail needs to play a bigger role in our nation's overall transportation system so we can move people and goods from one place to another faster and more efficiently,” said Congressman David Price (D-NC). “Planned rail investments will relieve congestion, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and create jobs – including 20,000 jobs in North Carolina. If we want to stay competitive in the international economy, we simply cannot continue to lag behind countries like China in developing a 21st Century infrastructure. We must invest in a smarter

transportation system that includes high-speed rail.”

“As the demands on our nation’s transportation infrastructure continue to grow, we must ensure that the investments we make today carry us well into the future,” said Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren. “By investing in high-speed rail, we give travelers an alternative, one that will lower our reliance on foreign energy sources and create American jobs. I’m proud that California is leading the way – as it is the only state that has passed a high-speed rail measure. It is estimated that California’s high-speed rail program will create nearly 100,000 jobs over its first five years. Nationally, high-speed rail will connect communities and increase our nation’s competitive edge.

“Our ability to move our products to market quickly and cheaply is a major factor in our global economic competitiveness,” said Rep. Tim Walz “This caucus is going to be a voice for making America more competitive and I am proud to serve as co-chair.”

“President Obama’s bold high-speed rail plan will create jobs, reinvigorate our manufacturing sector and spur economic development for years to come,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. “If we are going to win the future, we have to move goods and people more efficiently and quickly than ever before, and we look forward to working with Congress to bring Americans all of the economic benefits of high-speed rail.”